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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN NGOS WANT ANSWERS ON GUANTANAMO
RESETTLEMENT

Classified By: Political Counselor Kristen Bauer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Amnesty International and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee want to meet with US embassy officers to clarify when they can expect the USG to ask Norway for help in resettling Guantanamo detainees who cannot be sent back to their home countries. Post requests guidance for what to tell them. End Summary.

¶2. (C) After a phone call on an unrelated issue, poloff was contacted with a "heads up" from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) that they and Amnesty International (AI) would shortly be requesting a meeting to discuss with the US Embassy how to facilitate Norwegian acceptance of Guantanamo detainees who cannot return to their home countries.

¶3. (C) NHC, as well as AI, had previously asked poloff whether the USG had asked the GON for help with this issue, since the election of President Obama. The GON has, apparently, been telling NHC and AI that it would not take a position on this issue until it has been presented with a specific request for help directly from the USG. NHC and AI intend to also meet with the GON MFA either immediately before or after meeting with us.

¶4. (C) The NHC representative said that in October--at a working group meeting in Berlin where NHC, AI, the US-based Center for Constitutional Justice, and other NGOs met--the 50-60 detainees who fall into the aforementioned category were 'parceled out' to various countries. Norway "received" four Uzbeks. Apparently, the distribution was based partially on lobbying by the detainees' lawyers. The NHC representative said they are also working directly with the State Department in Washington to make the USG list resemble this list developed by NGOs.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: If possible, Post would like guidance from Washington that at a minimum will help us explain how and when we are making our decision. While we do not want to put the GON in a difficult position with respect to assenting to our eventual request (by directly pointing out their foot-dragging on this issue, especially since we have made no formal request since the inauguration), we also want to help NGOs as much as possible in their own lobbying efforts, as they will be the most insistent voices pushing the GON to accept former detainees. Despite the GON's strident opposition to Guantanamo, there is no particular appetite in the Norwegian administration to make the decision to accept detainees. End Comment.

JOHNSON